

# Seafront Consultation Findings Report





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# Introduction

## Purpose of the consultation

The Community Spirit Summer Survey 2007 highlighted the importance of the seafront to the city. 94% of respondents to the summer survey stated the seafront is very or fairly important to their quality of life. The seafront was also identified as the second green space in the city most in need of improvement, after Barnes Park. These results highlighted the need to develop a Regeneration Strategy to guide the future improvement of the seafront at Roker and Seaburn.

To inform this Strategy Sunderland City Council undertook a city wide consultation between 16 February and 3 April 2009. The purpose of the consultation was to find out what the people who live in, work in and visit Sunderland feel should be the vision for the future of the seafront. People were asked whether the vision should be a seafront to go to for a quiet walk, family fun, watersports, great events or any other suggestions they may have.

## Consultation methods

Data was collected using two methods - a survey (seafront consultation form) and workshops.

The survey formed part of the Community Spirit Spring Survey 2009 and was also made available at:

- all libraries across the city
- the Resort Office on Marine Walk
- exhibitions in the Sunderland Aquatic Centre, Civic Centre main reception and Central Library
- drop in sessions held on the Mobile Customer Service Centre at Marine Walk and Market Square during the consultation period

The survey could be completed online at [www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront](http://www.sunderland.gov.uk/seafront)

A copy of the survey was posted to all businesses and residents within the study area and it was printed in the Sunderland Echo on Wednesday 25 March 2009.

This report sets out the findings of the survey and workshops undertaken by the council with the Disability Alliance of Sunderland (DAS) and the Older People Independent Advisory Group (IAG).

City wide and Youth Parliament workshops were undertaken by Planning Aid, an independent organization which offers free planning support, advice and training to communities - the results of these workshops are available in a separate report produced by Planning Aid, which is included in the appendix of this document.

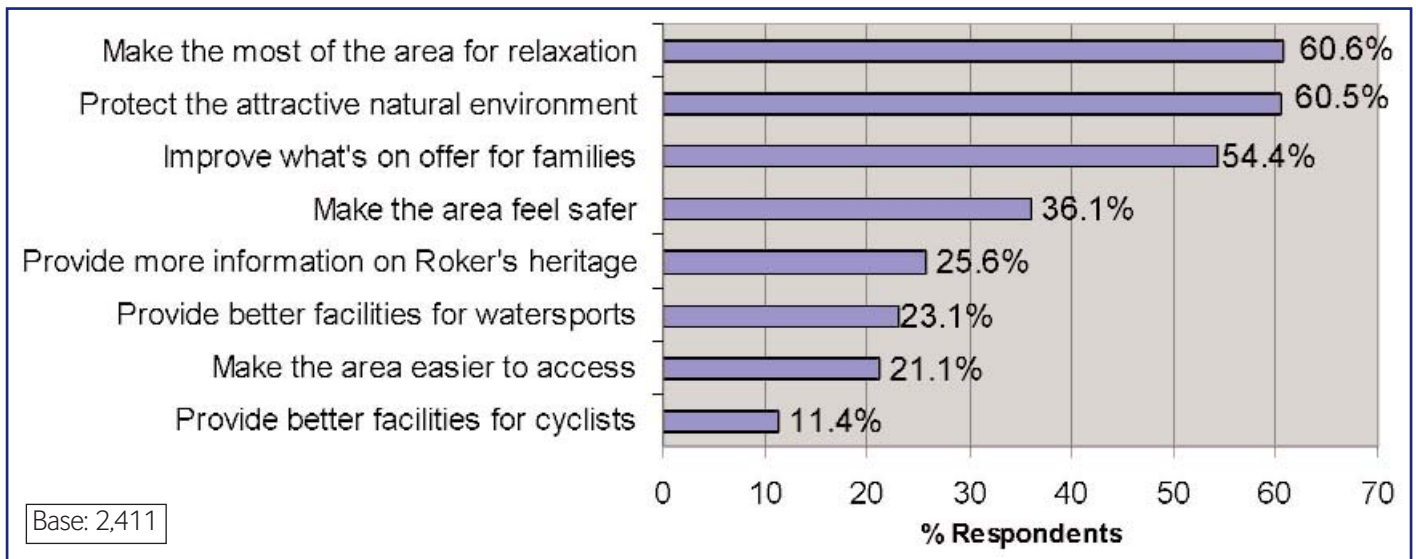
# Executive summary

In total 2,455 people completed a seafront consultation form. This included 843 members of the Community Spirit citizens' panel. Over 200 people participated in workshops on the future of the seafront, including council led workshops involving the Disability Alliance of Sunderland (DAS) and the Older People Independent Advisory Groups and workshops led by the independent organisation Planning Aid involving the Youth Parliament and residents across the city.

## The vision for Roker seafront

Respondents who completed a consultation form were asked to select the three aspects that they would most like to be included in the vision for Roker. The responses are shown in the graph below. 'Make the most of the area for relaxation' emerged as the aspect the majority of respondents would like to be included in the vision followed by 'protect the natural environment' and 'improve what's on offer for families'.

### Most important aspects to be included in the vision for Roker (Respondents asked to select three aspects)



## The issues at Roker seafront

Both the survey and workshops highlighted the following issues at Roker seafront:

- Attractiveness and cleanliness
- The toilets
- Entertainment and activities
- Catering facilities
- Dog litter
- Accessibility
- Heritage

## Attractiveness and cleanliness

The greatest number of comments related to the need to improve the attractiveness and cleanliness of Roker seafront. Comments included:

- Roker looks tired and tatty on the seafront.
- Improve Roker Beach - add plants, attractive lighting, seating and sculptures to the promenade.
- Keep it simple, attractive and clean capitalising on the natural assets available for cycles, walks, water sports. Ice cream parlour, coffee shops keep it traditional not over commercialised and making Roker Park a lovely place to be. I believe Sunderland has huge potential for attracting tourists.

Specific areas highlighted as being in need of maintenance included the grass banks on Marine Walk and Roker Pier.

- Tidy up the grassed areas and the bank leading down to Roker beach. At present, the grass is overgrown and untidy - even in the summer months - this grass is not mowed.
- Roker Pier lighthouse to be painted and the pier to be kept clean.

## The toilets

The second most frequently raised issue was public toilets at Roker. Many respondents commented more toilets are needed which are open all year round. Comments included:

- Public conveniences should be open all year round to cater for people enjoying the natural environment and not only those using commercial premises
- Wouldn't mind paying for them if they're maintained 24/7
- It is a wonderful area already, but there should be more picnic benches and better toilet facilities/baby changing to attract more families

The Disability Alliance Sunderland (DAS) also commented the toilets should include a Changing Places facility. This

facility allows sufficient space for helpers to get to each side of the disabled person when they are using the changing bench for changing and personal hygiene.

## Entertainment and activities

Many respondents commented that more entertainment and activities are required at Roker seafront, particularly for families and young people. Comments included:

- More things to do, the airshow is only on one weekend and there should be other attractions to see on other weekends
- The beach is popular with young people but the older people while young people are off enjoying themselves
- More summer time activities, for example: opportunities to hire bicycles, to try canoeing (or other watersports) for half hour or hour or longer, hiring wetsuits, try jet skiing, banana boat rides, hire nets and equipment for families to play volleyball, rounders etc on beach. All at a reasonable cost which will encourage families and individuals to try new things and get active.

## Suggestions for new activities at Roker seafront included:

- Live music from Roker bandstand
- An events space
- More street entertainment
- A roller skating rink
- Mini golf
- A heritage festival
- Using beach for outdoor education
- Walks along the seafront - different colours indicating different levels of difficulty
- Children's competitions on the beach

Many respondents also suggested activities that were once popular are brought back, including the Sunderland Illuminations, the boating lake and the miniature railway.



## Catering facilities

A high number of comments related to the need for more catering facilities, particularly facilities which are sheltered. Comments included:

- This area could include cafes and high quality restaurants in a period style.
- An old style coffee bar with milkshakes and a bit of a traditional look
- More European style cafes and restaurants.
- Better sheltered area for senior citizens to relax over a coffee and a chat.

## Dog litter

Dog fouling was highlighted as a major problem at the seafront. Suggestions of how this should be tackled ranged from banning dogs on the beach at all times, stricter enforcement and more dog waste bins. Comments included:

- Stricter enforcement of dog anti fouling by-laws. N.B. have encountered some dog owners who refuse to pick up their dogs dirt even when it's pointed out to them
- Dogs off all beaches at all times. More dog wardens.
- More dog waste bins and/or more frequent emptying of those that exist. More areas for off leader dog walking for responsible dog owners with well behaved dogs.
- Better fining system for dog fouling.

## Accessibility

Many respondents felt the seafront at Roker needs to be made more accessible. Suggestions for how this could be achieved included providing more car parking and improving public transport links. Comments included:

- More bus routes or parking.
- Direct bus link from Park Lane (to reduce travel time from Easington Lane, Hetton le Hole and Houghton le Spring)
- Better public transport. How about a heritage tramway linking the seafront and city centre, serving also the North Dock housing area, glass centre and St Peters campus

The workshop undertaken with the DAS highlighted the accessibility issues disabled people face at the seafront. It was felt by the DAS:

- there is not sufficient ramped access on to the beach
- drop kerbs could be better located
- uneven surface materials create discomfort for wheelchair users

## Heritage

Many respondents felt more should be made of Roker's heritage, comments included:

- Sculptures by local artists' reflecting our heritage.
- A general need to involve young people in art and design along the seafront is essential, art funding could be tapped into using this approach maybe
- Sunderland has a rich history in shipbuilding and therefore I feel that tourists to the area should be given the opportunity to learn about the history of Sunderland. I would like to see a museum located in the Roker area
- Provide more information about the pier and it's history

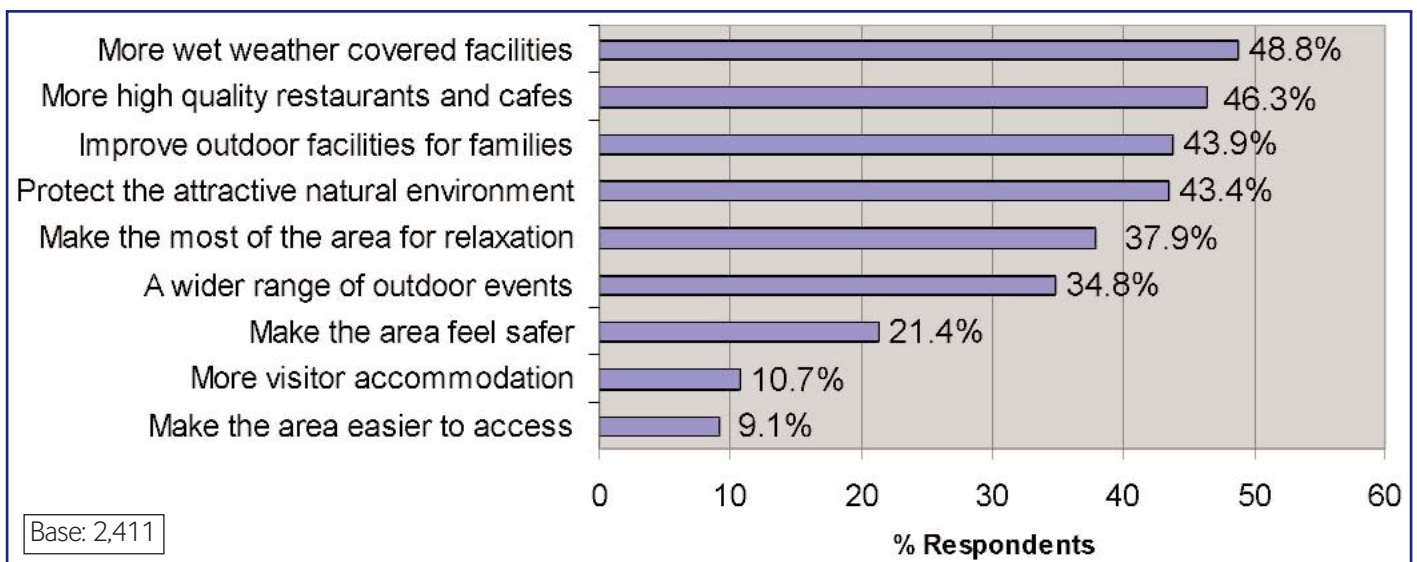
## The vision for Seaburn seafront

Respondents who completed a consultation form were asked to select the three aspects that they would like to be included in the vision for Seaburn. The responses are shown in the graph below. 'More wet weather covered facilities' emerged as the aspect the majority of people would like to be included in the vision followed by 'more high quality restaurants and cafes' and 'improve outdoor facilities for families'. 43% of people also stated the vision should include protect the attractive natural environment.

## The Issues at Seaburn seafront

- Family entertainment
- The toilets
- Events
- Litter
- Dog Litter
- South Shields
- Tidy up
- Road crossings

## Most important aspects to be included in the vision for Seaburn (Respondents asked to select three aspects)



## Family entertainment

The majority of comments related to ways in which family entertainment could be improved at Seaburn. Common suggestions for additional entertainment included:

- Mini golf
- A leisure pool
- Skating rink
- Train ride
- Boating pool
- A young persons music festival
- Picnic area
- Camping site

## The toilets

The second most frequently raised issue was toilet provision at Seaburn. Comments included:

- Better toilet facilities including disabled toilets, well signposted
- There appears to be a ruling that all toilets are shut in the autumn and open at Easter. Many people walk at Seaburn all the year round, mainly I may say locals and I think some thought should be given to this matter
- Improve the toilets, they are smelly and not cleaned properly. Build a proper changing area and more toilets
- The lack of open public toilets during the winter months is a problem
- It would be great for the public toilets to be open all year and not just for visitors who come to the resorts during the season

## Events

Other comments related to the potential to hold more events at Seaburn to promote the area. Suggestions for events included:

- More events to bring in large crowds such as boxing day dip and airshow bring in. Bring back the illuminations, and more sporting events in summer and live band concerts and it's a knockout event with local businesses

competing against each other for charity as they have each year in July at York Racecourse

- We need an all year buzz, not just in certain parts of the year
- Give people a reason to go to Seaburn. Make Seaburn the centre for attraction/entertainment concerts

## Litter

Many respondents commented about the litter at Seaburn, particularly around the takeaways. Comments included:

- The halting of the takeaway litter in Sea Road and surrounding streets. Also the underage drinking and the scattering of empty cans along the seafront
- Bins need to be emptied regularly on hot weekends when the coast is busy
- More rubbish bins and more frequent collections. Traders (chip shops) made to support the tidying up of the promenade

## Dog litter

As with Roker many respondents raised the issue of dog litter, comments included:

- There are still people taking dogs there who do not clean up. Its awful taking kids there when full of dog dirt
- Less dogs and litter, you must clean up Sunderland
- Dogs!! The owners blatantly ignore the signs on the beach and allow them to foul everywhere, where are the dog wardens not seen once despite frequent visits
- I take children to park or beach depending on the weather dogs exceeded humans by 6-1 today. Why cant beach be reserved for adults and children also outside May and September, beach should be for children not dogs

## South Shields

- I think the council should perhaps look to South Shields for inspiration, their seafront seems a lot more appealing to families, with more activities

## **Tidy up**

- The seafront just needs a lick of paint kept clean and tidy and more floral displays
- Cleanliness is very important to the area, especially in giving first impressions to visitors to the area
- Let's get rid of the tat, the concrete and the endless chip cartons. Let's be healthy, up market, clean and green

## **Road crossings**

Many respondents commented Whituburn Road is a busy road which is difficult to cross. This was a particular issue for the DAS. During the site visit the light controlled pedestrian crossing adjacent the Seaburn Centre did not give DAS members sufficient time to cross the road.

# Survey Findings

## Response rate

In total 2,455 people completed a seafront consultation form. This included 843 members of the Community Spirit citizens' panel.

## Respondent profile

Respondents broadly reflected Sunderland residents in terms of gender, disability, religion and ethnicity. Respondents are less representative in terms of age, with fewer respondents aged under 24 years and more from the 55 to 64 age groups responding. To partially compensate for this Planning Aid carried out a workshop on the seafront with Sunderland's Youth Parliament to ensure the views of young people were considered in the consultation.

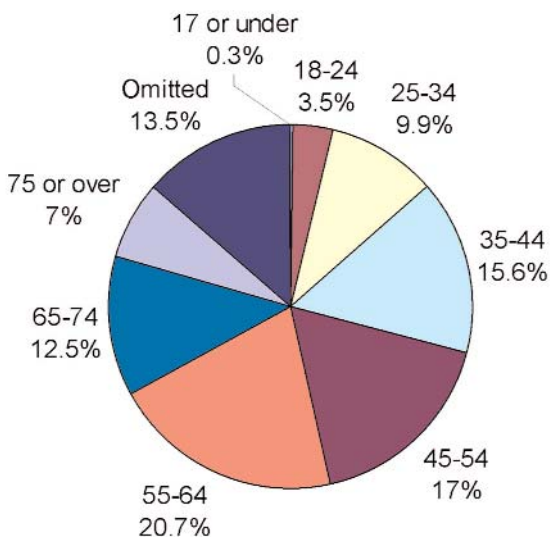
### Gender

Female 50%  
 Male 39.7%  
 Transgender 0.3%  
 Omitted 10%

### Disabled

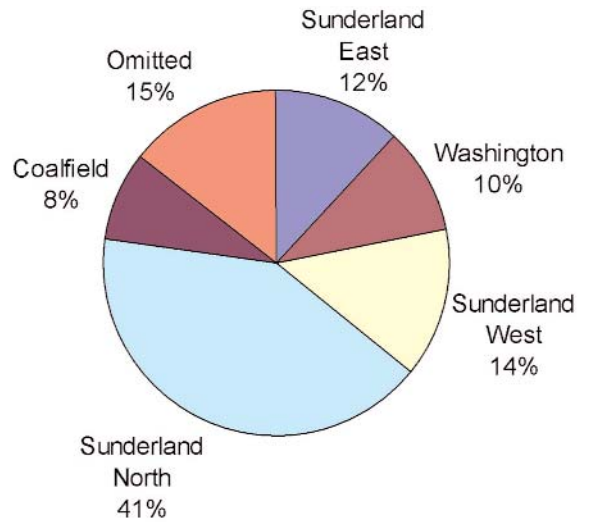
Yes 14.9%  
 No 74.6 %  
 Omitted 10.5%

### Age



Base: 2,123

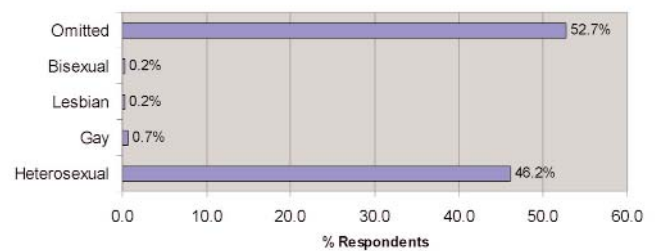
## City resident respondents by area



Base: 2,098

Although a greater percentage of the North Area population responded, diagram 1 on page 8 illustrates seafront consultation forms were completed by residents from across the city.

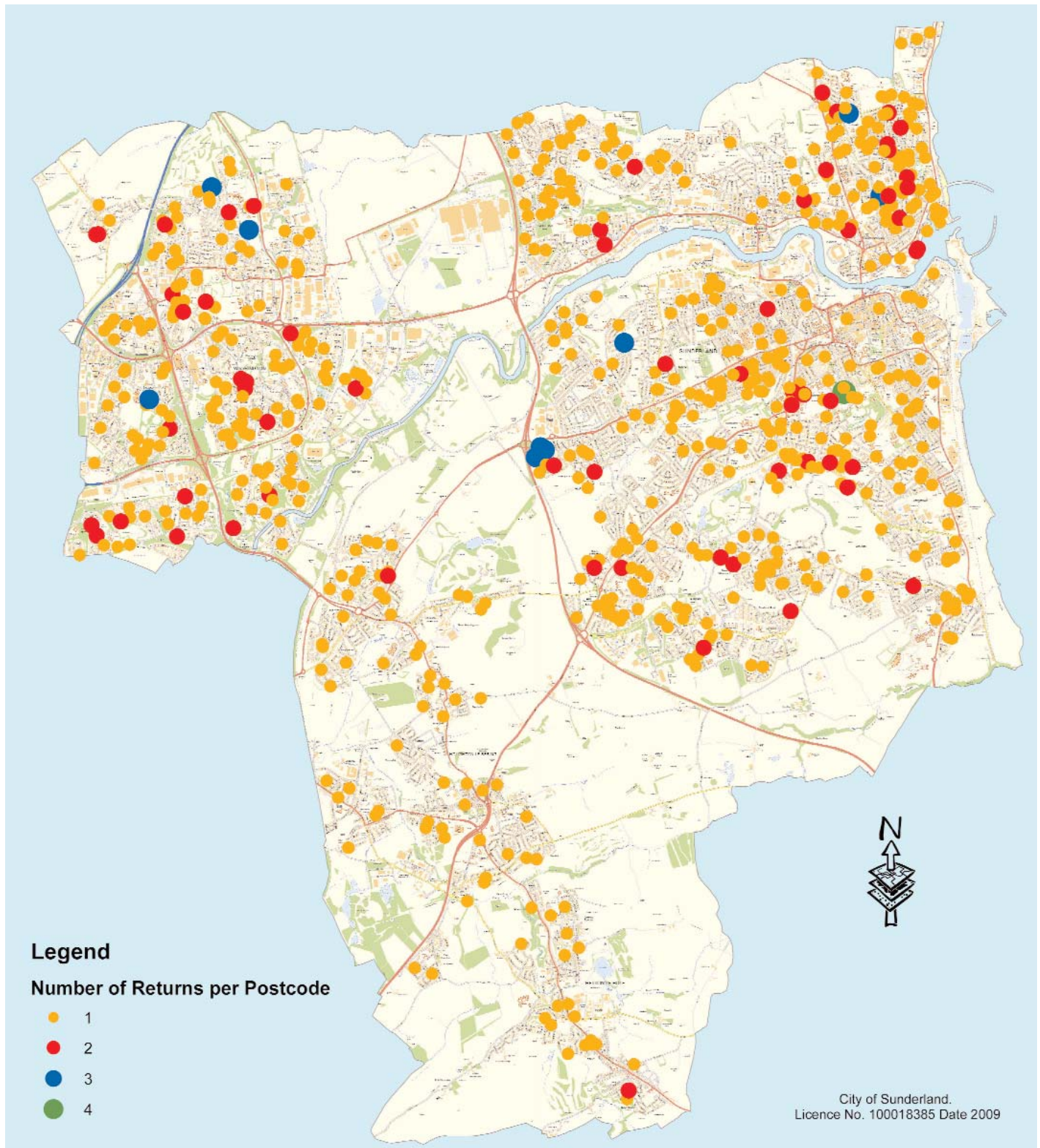
## Sexuality of respondents



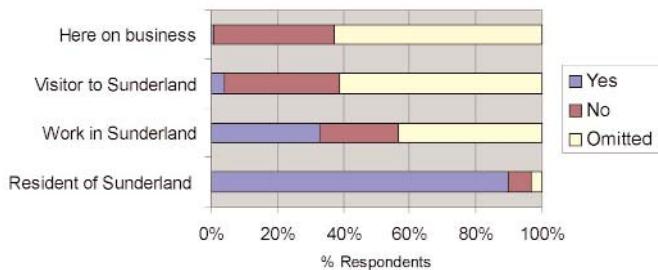
Base: 1,328

Response rates from gay, lesbian and bisexual people were numerically low. It is not possible to determine if respondents broadly reflected Sunderland residents in terms of sexuality as this data does not exist for the city. However it is important that the council continues to seek the views of gay, lesbian and bisexual people regarding the development of the seafront area, as estimates suggest that they will make up a significant slice of the Sunderland population.

Figure 1: Distribution of survey respondents who provided postcodes



## Relationship to Sunderland city

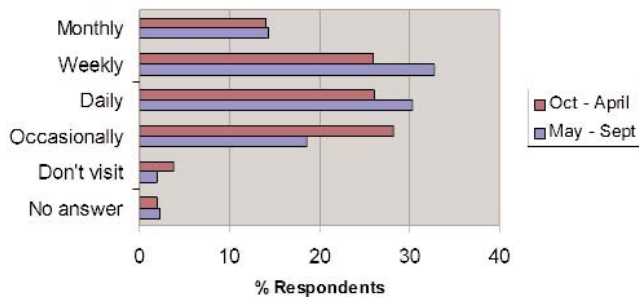


Base: Resident 2,377; Work 1,387; Visitor 948; Business 912

The majority of people who took part in the survey were residents of the city; 33% of respondents worked in Sunderland. Although surveys were displayed at the Tourist Information Centre only 4% of people who responded were visitors to the city and 0.7% here on business.

A relatively small percentage of participants came from outside of Sunderland. Of those respondents that gave their postcode, 34 were from County Durham, 57 from Newcastle-upon-Tyne and 10 from outside of the region.

## Frequency of visits to the seafront



Base: May - Sept 2,402; Oct - April 2,407

Respondents were asked how often they visited the seafront during peak season, between May and September. Responses are shown in the graph above. The majority visited the seafront daily or weekly during peak season. Only 2% of respondents stated they don't visit at all.

Respondents were also asked how often they visited the seafront outside of peak season, between October and April. 28% of people stated they visit the seafront outside of peak season occasionally, 26% weekly and 26% daily. This indicates that although people are slightly less likely to visit the seafront outside of peak season the seafront is well visited throughout the year.

## Variations in response by gender, disability and age

Female respondents are less likely to visit the seafront as regularly as male respondents throughout the year.

Disabled respondents visit the seafront less frequently than those who do not consider themselves as disabled.

Generally there was little relationship between the age of the respondent and the frequency of visit, with the majority of respondents from all ages visiting daily or weekly. However respondents under the age of 24 were more likely to visit the seafront occasionally and less likely to visit weekly. Outside of peak season the frequency of visits from all age ranges reduced with the exception of those under the age of 17 who were more likely to visit the seafront weekly or monthly during this period. Due to the low response rate from those aged under 17 it is not possible to say if this is representative of that age group.

During May and September respondents from North Area are more likely to visit the seafront daily, East and West Area weekly and Washington and the Coalfields occasionally. Outside of peak season only respondents from North Area were more likely to visit the seafront daily. Respondents from the remainder of the city were more likely to visit occasionally.

## Reason for visiting the seafront

Respondents were asked to select from a list the usual main purpose of their visit to the seafront. The most frequent reasons given for visiting the seafront were fresh air, taking children to the beach and going out for a meal. The least frequent reasons given for visiting were watersports and walking the dog.

Reason	Mentions
Fresh air	1,660
Taking children to the beach	777
Out for a meal	677
Out for a coffee/drink	559
To attend an event	550
Taking children to the park	453
Walking the dog	391
Watersports	65

Table 1: Main purpose of visiting seafront (from list provided)

Respondents were also able to add other main purposes for visiting the seafront. The following other purposes were identified:

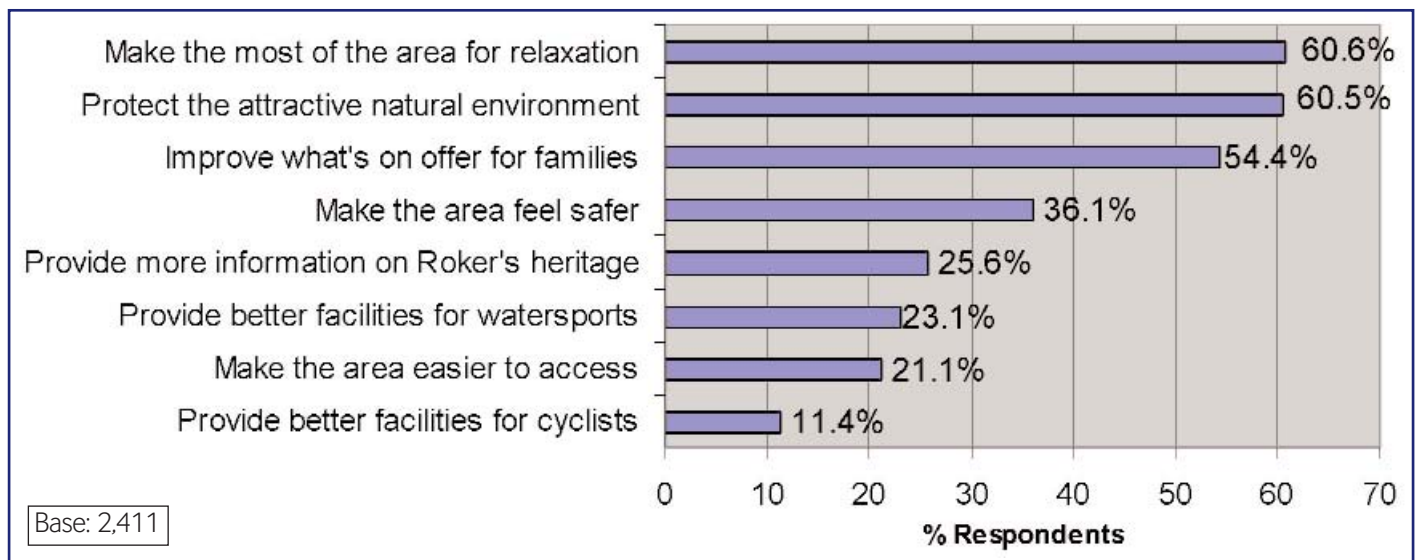
Reason	Mentions
For a walk	113
Live at the seafront	62
To cycle	57
To go shopping	49
For exercise	41
To go running	34
For the scenery	20
To work	16
Visit friends and family	12

Table 2: Main purpose of visiting seafront (other)



## The vision for Roker

### Most important aspects to be included in the vision for Roker (Respondents asked to select three aspects)



Respondents were asked to select the three aspects that they would most like to be included in the vision for Roker. The responses are shown in the graph above. 'Make the most of the area for relaxation' emerged as the aspect the majority of respondents would like to be included in the vision followed by 'protect the natural environment' and 'improve what's on offer for families'.

### Disability

The responses between people who classed themselves as disabled and those who didn't were very similar, however people who did class themselves as disabled were more likely to prioritise making the area feel safer and making the area more accessible.

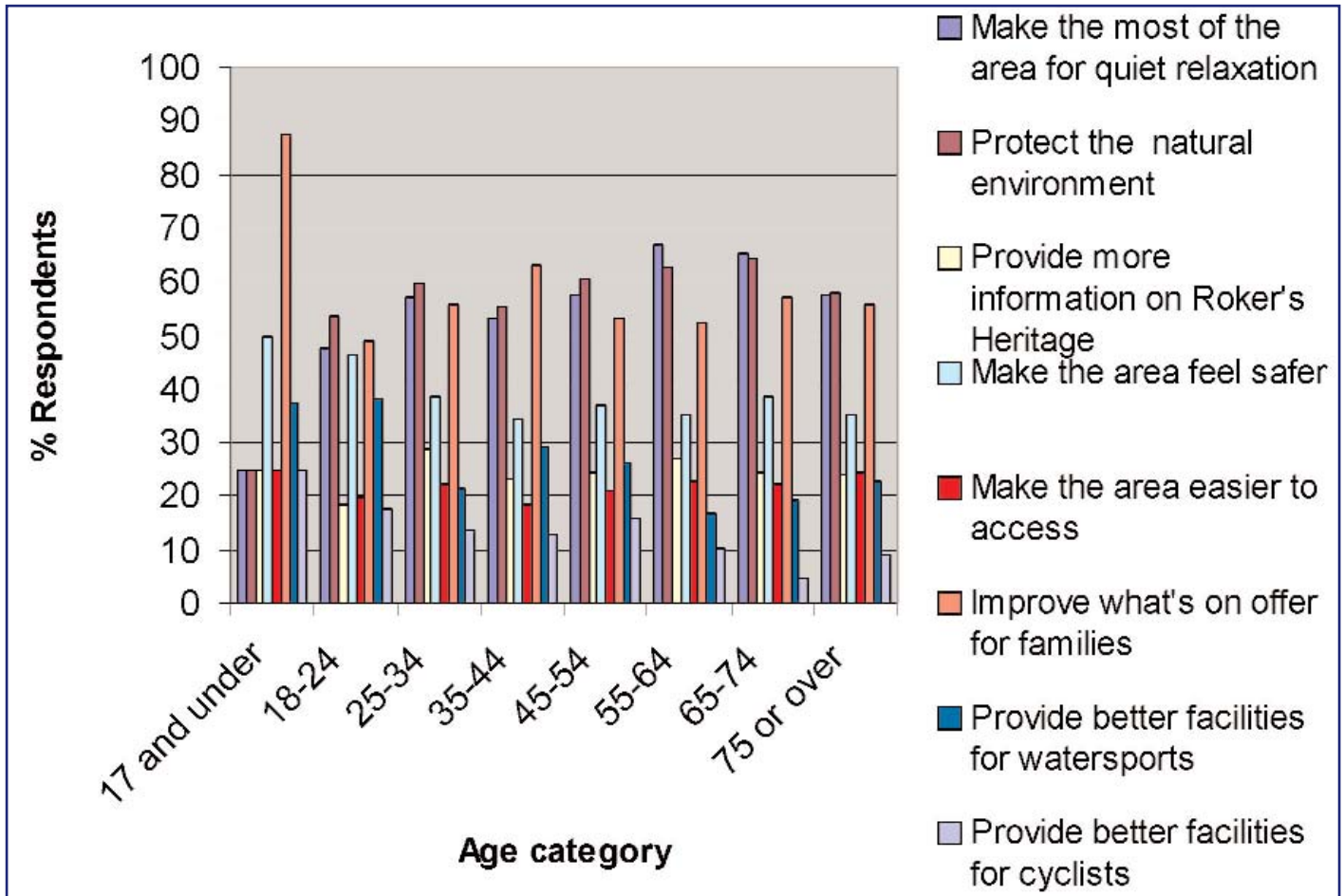
### Variations in response by gender, disability, age and area

Results showed some variation by gender, disability, age and area.

### Gender

Female respondents were more likely to prioritise protecting the natural environment and improving what's on offer for families, whereas male respondents were more likely to prioritise making the most of the area for quiet relaxation.

**Most important aspects to be included in the vision for Roker by age  
(Respondents asked to select three aspects)**



**Age**

The graph above shows responses by age category to the question 'What are the three aspects that you would most like to be included in the vision for Roker?'. The top three aspects to be included in the vision remained the same in all age categories, with the exception of those aged 17 and under. People under the age of 24 were more likely to prioritise making the area feel safer and provide better watersport facilities than those over 25. Again due to the low response rate from people under 17 it is not possible to say if this is representative of this age group.

**Area**

Overall there was little variation in responses to this question from each of the five areas of the city. Respondents from the North Area of the city were less likely to prioritise improving access to the seafront. Whilst respondents from the East and West Areas of the city were more likely to prioritise improving what's on offer for families, respondents from the remainder of the city were more likely to prioritise protecting the natural environment and making the most of the area for relaxation.

## Other issues

Respondents were asked for any additional comments about the vision for Roker. 1,082 responses were given. The most popular themes arising are discussed below.

### Attractiveness and cleanliness

The greatest number of comments related to the need to improve the attractiveness and cleanliness of Roker seafront. Comments included:

*Roker looks tired and tatty on the seafront.*

*Improve Roker Beach - add plants, attractive lighting, seating and sculptures to the promenade.*

*Keep it simple, attractive and clean capitalising on the natural assets available for cycles, walks, water sports. Ice cream parlour, coffee shops keep it traditional not over commercialised and making Roker Park a lovely place to be. I believe Sunderland has huge potential for attracting tourists.*

Specific areas highlighted as being in need of maintenance included the grass banks on Marine Walk and Roker Pier.

*Tidy up the grassed areas and the bank leading down to Roker beach. At present, the grass is overgrown and untidy - even in the summer months - this grass is not mowed.*

*Roker Pier lighthouse to be painted and the pier to be kept clean.*

### Toilets

The second most frequently raised issue was public toilets at Roker. Many respondents commented more toilets are needed which are open all year round. Comments included:

*Public conveniences should be open all year round to cater for people enjoying the natural environment and not only those using commercial premises.*

*More public toilets! With attendants!*

*It is a wonderful area already, but there should be more picnic benches and better toilet facilities/baby changing to attract more families.*

## Entertainment and activities

Many respondents commented that more entertainment and activities are required at Roker seafront, particularly for families and young people. Comments included:

*More things to do, the airshow is only on one weekend and there should be other attractions to see on other weekends.*

*Open air events in the summer but not on the scale of the Airshow. More summer time activities, for example: opportunities to hire bicycles, to try canoeing (or other watersports) for half hour or hour or longer, hiring wetsuits(!) try jet skiing, banana boat rides, hire nets and equipment for families to play volleyball, rounders etc on beach. All at a reasonable cost which will encourage families and individuals to try new things and get active.*

Suggestions for new activities at Roker seafront included:

- Live music from Roker bandstand
- An events space
- More street entertainment
- A roller skating rink
- Mini golf
- A heritage festival

Many respondents also suggested bringing back activities that were once popular, including the Sunderland Illuminations, the boating lake and the miniature railway.

### Catering facilities

A high number of comments related to the need for more catering facilities, particularly facilities which are sheltered. Comments included:

*This area could include cafes and high quality restaurants in a period style.*

*More European style cafes and restaurants.*

*Better sheltered area for senior citizens to relax over a coffee and a chat.*

## **Dog litter**

Dog fouling was highlighted as a major problem at the seafront. Suggestions of how this should be tackled ranged from banning dogs on the beach at all times, stricter enforcement and more dog waste bins. Comments included:

*Stricter enforcement of dog anti fouling by-laws. N.B. have encountered some dog owners who refuse to pick up their dogs dirt even when it's pointed out to them*

*Dogs off all beaches at all times. More dog wardens.*

*More dog waste bins and/or more frequent emptying of those that exist. More areas for off leader dog walking for responsible dog owners with well behaved dogs.*

## **Accessibility**

Many respondents felt the seafront at Roker needs to be made more accessible. Suggestions for how this could be achieved included providing more car parking and improving public transport links. Comments included:

*More bus routes or parking.*

*Direct bus link from Park Lane (to reduce travel time from Easington Lane, Hetton le Hole and Houghton le Spring)*

*Better public transport. How about a heritage tramway linking the seafront and city centre, serving also the North Dock housing area, glass centre and St Peters campus*

## **Heritage**

Many respondents felt more should be made of Roker's heritage, comments included:

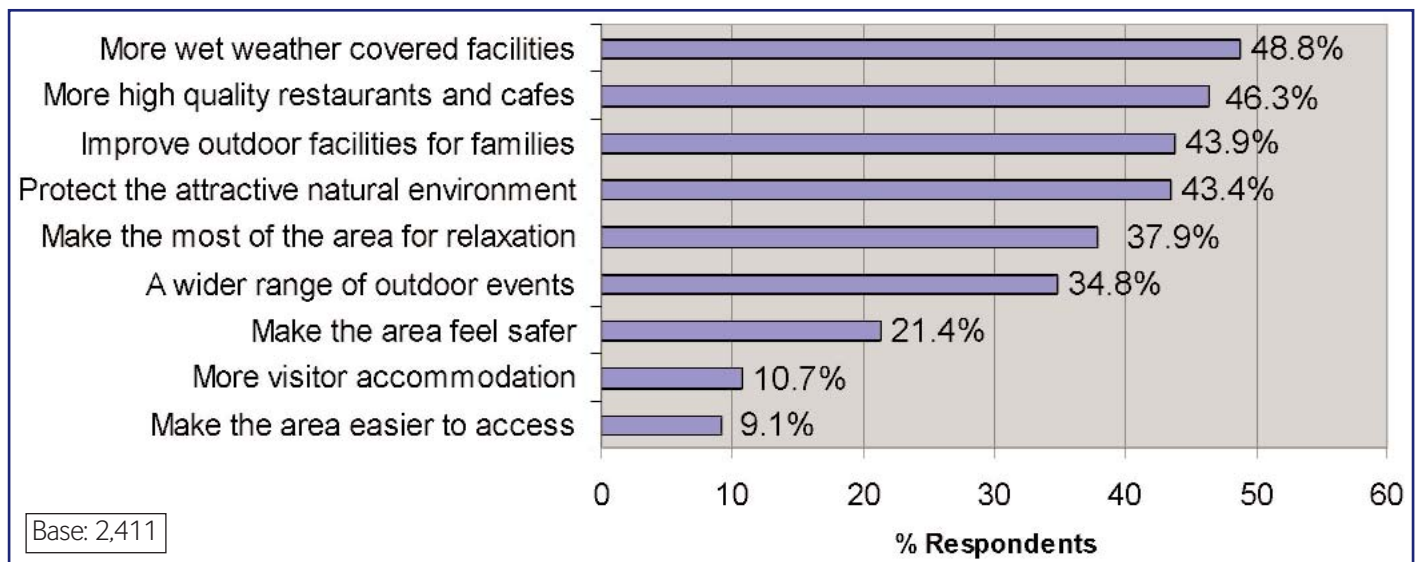
*Sculptures by local artists reflecting our heritage.*

*Sunderland has a rich history in shipbuilding and therefore I feel that tourists to the area should be given the opportunity to learn about the history of Sunderland. I would like to see a museum located in the Roker area*

*Provide more information about the pier and its history*

## The vision for Seaburn

### Most important aspects to be included in the vision for Seaburn (Respondents asked to select three aspects)



Respondents were asked to select the three aspects that they would like to be included in the vision for Seaburn. The responses are shown in the graph above. 'More wet weather covered facilities' emerged as the aspect the majority of people would like to be included in the vision followed by 'more high quality restaurants and cafes' and 'improve outdoor facilities for families'. 43% of people also stated the vision should include protect the attractive natural environment.

### Variations in response by gender, age, disability and area

Results showed some variation by gender, disability, age and area.

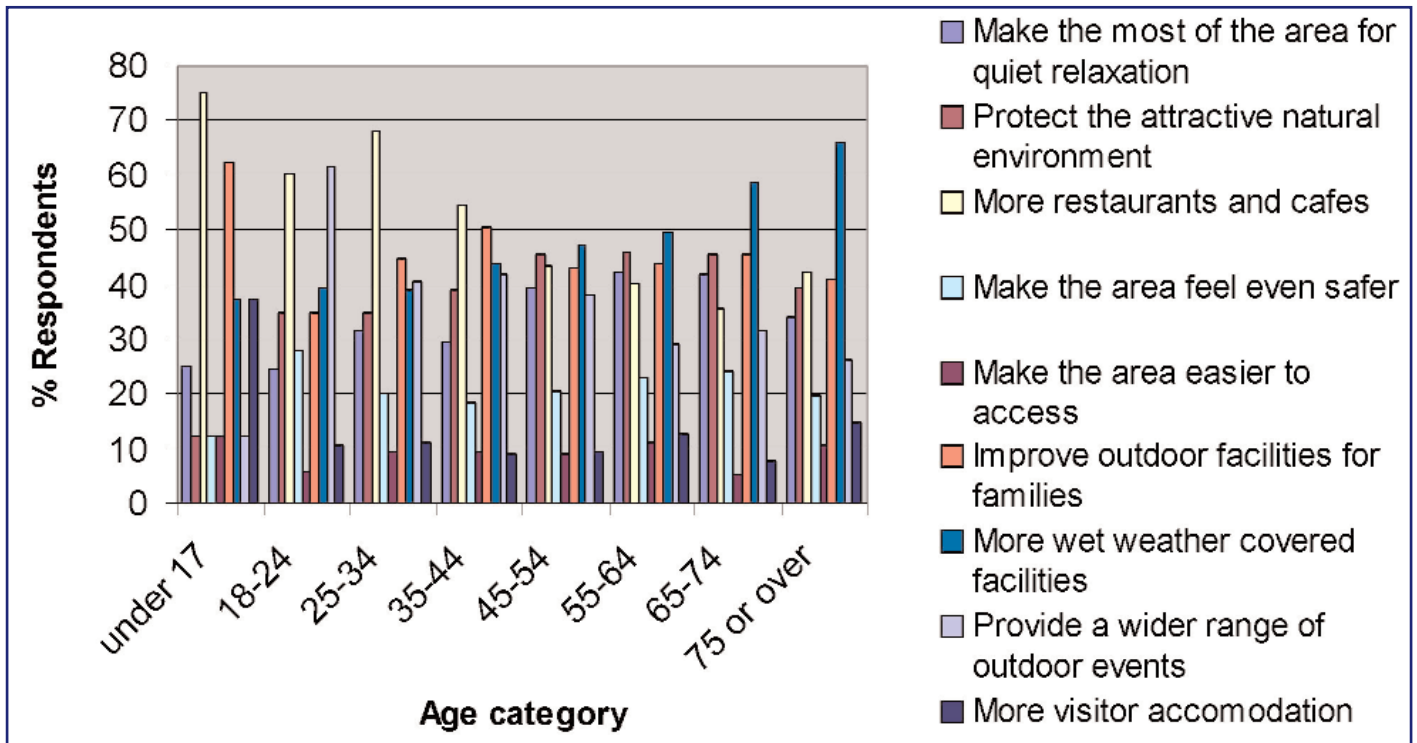
### Gender

Female respondents were slightly more likely to prioritise the provision of wet weather facilities and improving outdoor facilities for families, whereas male respondents were more likely to prioritise protecting the natural environment and making most of the area for quiet relaxation.

### Disability

The responses between people who classed themselves as disabled and those who didn't were very similar, however people who did class themselves as disabled were more likely to prioritise making the area feel safer, making the area more accessible and providing more wet weather facilities.

**Most important aspects to be included in the vision for Seaburn by age  
(Respondents asked to select three aspects)**



**Age**

The graph above shows responses by age category to the question 'What are the three aspects that you would most like to be included in the vision for Seaburn?'. As the graph illustrates responses to this question varied by age. Overall the older the respondent the more priority they gave to the provision of wet weather facilities. Respondents under the age of 17 were more likely to priorities the improvement of outdoor facilities for families, and respondents aged between 18 and 24 prioritised the provision of a wider range of outdoor events. Overall the younger the respondent the more likely they were to prioritise the provision of high quality restaurants and cafes.

**Area**

Respondents from all areas of the city prioritised the provision of more high quality restaurants and cafes. In contrast to respondents from other areas of the city where providing outdoor facilities for families and wet weather covered facilities was seen as the main priority, respondents from Washington were far more likely to prioritise protecting the attractive natural environment and making the most of the area for quiet relaxation.

## Other issues

Respondents were asked for any additional comments they had about the vision for Seaburn. 911 responses were given. The most popular themes arising are discussed below.

## Family entertainment

The majority of comments related to ways in which family entertainment could be improved at Seaburn. Common suggestions for additional entertainment included:

- Mini golf
- A leisure pool
- Skating rink
- Train ride
- Boating pool

## Toilets

The second most frequently raised issue was toilet provision at Seaburn. Comments included:

*Better toilet facilities including disabled toilets, well signposted.*

*There appears to be a ruling that all toilets are shut in the autumn and open at Easter. Many people walk at Seaburn all the year round, mainly I may say locals and I think some thought should be given to this matter.*

## Events

Other comments related to the potential to hold more events at Seaburn to promote the area. Suggestions for events included:

*More events to bring in large crowds such as boxing day dip and airshow bring in. Bring back the illuminations, and more sporting events in summer and live band concerts and it's a knockout event with local businesses competing against each other for charity as they have each year in July at York Racecourse.*

*Give people a reason to go to Seaburn. Make Seaburn the centre for attraction/entertainment concerts.*

## Litter

Many respondents commented about the litter at Seaburn, particularly around the takeaways. Comments included: *The halting of the takeaway litter in Sea Road and surrounding streets. Also the underage drinking and the scattering of empty cans along the seafront.*

*More rubbish bins and more frequent collections. Traders (chip shops) made to support the tidying up of the promenade.*

## Dog litter

As with Roker many respondents raised the issue of dog litter, comments included:

*There are still people taking dogs there who do not clean up. Its awful taking kids there when full of dog dirt.*

*Less dogs and litter, you must clean up Sunderland.*

## Other comments

Respondents were asked if they had any other comments relating to the seafront. 786 responses were given to this question in total. In order of frequency these comments were:

## Dog fouling

The majority of comments related to dog fouling and the need for greater enforcement of dog by-laws.

*Dogs!! The owners blatantly ignore the signs on the beach and allow them to foul everywhere. Where are the dog wardens not seen once despite frequent visits.*

*I take children to park or beach depending on the weather dogs exceeded humans by 6-1 today. Why can't beach be reserved for adults and children also outside May and September, beach should be for children not dogs.*

## South Shields

Many respondents commented South Shields has more to offer families than Sunderland. Comments included:

*I think the council should perhaps look to South Shields for inspiration, their seafront seems a lot more appealing to families, with more activities.*

## Tidy up

Many respondents felt Sunderland seafront needed cleaning up. Comments included:

*The seafront just needs a lick of paint kept clean and tidy and more floral displays.*

*Let's get rid of the tat, the concrete and the endless chip cartons. Let's be healthy, up market, clean and green.*

## Toilets

Toilet provision came under a lot of criticism. Comments included:

*Improve the toilets, they are smelly and not cleaned properly. Build a proper changing area and more toilets.*

*The lack of open public toilets during the winter months is a problem.*

*It would be great for the public toilets to be open all year and not just for visitors who come to the resorts during the season.*

## Litter

Many respondents felt litter was a major issue. Comments included:

*A permanent cleaner taking rubbish and removing dog dirt is an essential. Gives a bad impression to visitors to see this mess left for days or weeks. Harbour has so much rubbish floating on it, there must be a way to remove large pieces*

*of rubbish. plus signs to keep people clear of cycle path. It is noticeable that after big outdoor events the cleaning team do a great job to quickly clear up the litter. At other times the bins at Seaburn get too full and littering occurs. More use of big green swing bins would help at busy weekends, as litter spoils the promenade. Otherwise it is a lovely place for families and those out for a stroll.*

## Restaurants and cafes

Comments relating to restaurants and cafes emphasised there is a need for high quality facilities.

*More restaurants other than fish and chip takeaways.*

*A few more bars and restaurants would be nice, something with a continental look and feel.*

## Children's activities

It was felt by many respondents that there is not enough for young people to do at the seafront. Typical comments included:

*Please do something for the youth and children, don't just do what retired old folks want*

*There are no facilities for entertaining children when the weather is bad (which is quite often) indoor leisure facilities would be a great attraction to the seafront for locals and visitors alike.*

## Parking

Many respondents commented that there was not sufficient car parking at the seafront. comments included:

*Not enough car parking spaces too many yellow lines to prevent people parking.*

*Improve the parking for those visitors arriving by car offering good value for money for an all day stay with a few more smaller cafes dotted along the area - get it right and Seaburn will sell itself!!*



# Site visit by Disability Alliance Sunderland

## Introduction

The Disability Alliance Sunderland (DAS) - formerly the Physical Disability Alliance - is an umbrella organisation that represents disabled people and acts as a focal point for agencies and statutory bodies. The DAS seeks to represent the disabled citizens of Sunderland, their families, friends and carers.

On the 20th of March 2009 representatives from the DAS and council officers undertook a site visit of Seaburn and Roker seafront to find out how user friendly the seafront is for disabled people. The site visit and meetings with DAS members highlighted a number of key issues which are summarised below. These findings will help inform the development of a Seafront Regeneration Strategy for Roker and Seaburn seafront.

## Key Issues

### Toilets



Underground toilets at Seaburn

The issue which raised the most concern was toilet provision at the seafront. The DAS felt that current toilet provision at the seafront is inadequate and does not meet disabled people's needs. The toilets adjacent the Recreation Park at Seaburn were highlighted as particularly bad as they are underground, accessible only by stairs, meaning many people can't use them. Although the disabled toilet at

Marine Walk is accessible out of season by Radar key, it was pointed out that some disabled people do not have a key or may not take it everywhere with them, therefore it would be preferable if all toilets were open throughout the year.

It was suggested toilets are manned to discourage vandalism.



Marine Walk toilets

Ideally the DAS would like a Changing Places facility located at the seafront. Changing Places are designed for use by disabled people with some assistance from carers, parents or personal assistants, although they can also be used by disabled people wishing to use facilities independently. The Changing Places allow sufficient space for helpers to get to each side of the disabled person when they are using the changing bench for changing and personal hygiene.

It was highlighted that it is not sufficient to have toilet provision if people are not aware of it. Information needs to be available on where toilets are and when they are open. One DAS member commented 'people need to know if toilets are open otherwise they will not risk travelling to the seafront.'

## Seating



Seating removed from Seaburn shelter due to vandalism



Seating without backs

DAS members felt there was not sufficient seating in sheltered areas. Seating in the shelters at Roker and Seaburn lower promenade has been removed due to vandalism.

Some of the seating along the seafront has no back support. The DAS commented that people who suffer from back or neck problems need higher back rests.

## Road crossings

Whitburn Road proved difficult to cross. Pedestrian refuge islands did not have enough space to fit a person and wheelchair on the island. The light controlled pedestrian crossing adjacent the Seaburn Centre did not give DAS members sufficient time to cross the road.

It was suggested that more light controlled crossings are needed along the road rather than islands.



Pedestrian refuge island



Light controlled crossing

## Surface treatments

Degraded tarmac and uneven surface materials create a rough surface for wheelchair users to navigate. Wheelchair users also suffered discomfort crossing the line of pebbles set in concrete at Marine Walk. It was suggested this could be overcome by introducing some level crossing points in between the pebbles.



Surface treatment on Marine Walk, Roker

Although the tarmac on Seaburn lower promenade may not be visually appealing it has a smooth surface which is far easier to navigate.



Seaburn lower promenade

## Access to lower promenade from upper promenade



Steep pathways lack handrail

The pathways linking Roker Terrace (upper promenade) to Marine Walk (lower promenade) were too steep and uneven for manual wheelchairs to go up or down. Equally there were few handrails to offer support.

## Drop kerbs



Drop kerb on to Marine Walk Road

Members of the DAS commented that there are not enough drop kerbs on Marine Walk and those which do exist are poorly located. Problems encountered on the site visit included wheelchair users having to use drop kerbs

which took them onto Marine Walk road. This was a particular issue at the roundabout adjacent Bellerby Amusements where the drop kerb takes wheelchair users onto the roundabout rather than the adjacent pavement. At the entrance to Roker Pier there is a drop kerb at one side of the pavement onto the road but no drop kerb on the opposite pavement.

Members of the DAS parking in bays outside of the Seaburn Centre found there were no drop kerbs from the parking onto the pavement.

### Access to the beach



Lack of ramped access to beach

Discussions with the DAS members highlighted the difficulties wheelchair users face in accessing the beach and the sea. Suggested solutions include creating viewing platforms which go down to the sand or alternatively offering Beach or Amphibious Wheelchairs for hire. Beach Wheelchairs have larger wheels which are suitable for beach terrain. Amphibious Wheelchairs float and can be taken from the beach into the sea.

It was felt there are not enough ramps down to the beach. The only ramp to the beach located close to car parking is at the south of Marine Walk adjacent the RNLI building.

### Car parking

It was highlighted that Disabled Parking is an issue on Airshow day. Free disabled parking during this weekend is at the far end of Seaburn Camp. It is difficult for wheelchair users to navigate across the grass to the road and the site is remote from many of the day's activities. It was suggested at future events a central drop off point is provided for those who need it.

### Transport

During the site visit a bus transported members of the DAS from Roker to Seaburn as it was not a manageable distance for attendees to travel on foot or by wheelchair. The DAS members felt a hop on and off tram or bus service along the seafront would make the seafront more accessible for many people particularly those with limited mobility.

### Amenities

DAS members felt the seafront needs more amenities. Comments included

*'There are only hotels and guesthouses at the seafront. There should be cheaper accommodation such as a Youth Hostel with disabled access.'*

*'The seafront needs sheltered cafes along the lower promenade.'*

# Older People Independant Advisory Group Workshops

## Introduction

Sunderland has seven Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs) established to provide an opportunity for hard to reach people in the city to contribute their views on public services and policy development. These groups feed into the Sunderland Partnership, which is made up of public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations across Sunderland. The Older People IAG is made up of eight groups of people aged 50 and above from different areas of the city.

During March 2009 the Older People IAG groups took part in workshops on the future of the seafront to feed into the development of a Seafront Regeneration Strategy for Roker and Seaburn seafront. Seven workshops took place with groups in Castletown, Doxford, Penshaw, Hendon, Houghton, Monkwearmouth and the city centre. At each workshop, attendees were shown photographs of the seafront and asked if what each photograph showed was something which should be saved in its present condition (good), needed repairing or improving (ugly) or needed replacing (bad). The results of all seven workshops are summarised below.

N.B The photographs used at the workshops are included in this report .

## Results

As the table above right indicates, the opinions of each of the seven groups varied. Overall, attendees of the workshops felt the majority of the seafront could be repaired and improved.

Feature	Save (Good)	Replace (Bad)	Repair (Ugly)
Lighthouse keepers' cottages	7		
Roker Hotel	7		
Pier and lighthouse	4		3
Pirate play park	4		3
Adventure Sunderland	4		3
Roker amusements and cafe	4		3
Seaburn lower promenade			7
Entrance to Roker Park			7
Public space in front of Roker Cliff	1		6
Marine Walk play park	1	1	5
Traffic calming on Marine Walk	2		5
Leisure amusements Seaburn	3		4
Lighting columns	3		4
Marriott Hotel Seaburn	2	1	4
Pullman Lodge Seaburn	1	3	3
Seaburn shelter		3	4

Table 3: The number of groups that felt features needed saving, replacing or repairing

## Save in present condition (The Good)



Lighthouse keepers' cottages

All groups were very positive about the Lighthouse Keepers' Cottages on Marine Walk (which house North East Diving Academy) and Roker Hotel on Roker Terrace. Overall, groups commented that these buildings look attractive and are well maintained. It was felt the Diving Academy in the Lighthouse Keepers' Cottages is a good use of the building which could attract people to the seafront.

All groups commented Roker pier and lighthouse are assets which could be made more of. It was suggested this could be achieved by opening up the lighthouse and the tunnel under the pier and illuminating both structures on an evening. Although both structures were described as being attractive three groups felt they need to be repaired.



Roker pier and lighthouse

Just over half of the groups felt the Pirate play park behind the Pullman Lodge at Seaburn should be saved in its present condition; three groups felt it could be improved. Suggested improvements include extending the opening hours, better signposting and extending the play park.



Pirate play park



Adventure Sunderland

Overall, groups felt Adventure Sunderland Watersports Centre on Marine Walk is a good facility although many people felt it could be made more accessible. Comments included:

*'It is a good facility for young people, but not many people know about it.'*

*'It is too expensive for most people to use. It should be better advertised.'*

Groups had mixed opinions about the appearance of the building. Whilst some groups like its modern appearance others feel it looked unwelcoming. One group commented:

*'When it's closed it looks like a fortress.'*



Roker Amusements and café

The majority of groups felt Roker Amusements and café located on Marine Walk is a good facility, being one of the few wet weather activities at the seafront. Opinions were mixed on the appearance of the building. Comments included:

*'It looks clean and colourful.'*

*'Corrugated iron looks ugly.'*

## Repair (The Ugly)



Entrance to Roker Park



Seaburn lower promenade

All groups agreed that Seaburn lower promenade and the entrance to Roker Park are in need of repair. Comments included:

*The entrance to Roker Park 'needs to be modernised and made to feel safe.'*

*'The seats (on Seaburn lower promenade) should face the sea. The tarmac is good as it's easy to push wheelchairs across but the area needs to be cleaned up and brightened up.'*



Public space in front of Roker cliff

The majority of groups also felt the public space in front of Roker cliff is in need of repair. Comments included:

*'It needs some kind of focal point, maybe a piece of artwork or picnic tables.'*



Traffic calming on Marine Walk

Five of the seven groups felt the traffic calming on Marine Walk should be repaired, two groups felt it should be saved. Overall groups felt traffic calming is important to prevent people speeding and parking on the street, but the majority felt the current traffic calming could be made more attractive. One group suggested using tubs of plants rather than bollards to brighten up the area.

## Mixed opinions



Leisureworld amusements

Groups gave mixed opinions on a number of issues. Whilst four groups felt the Leisureworld amusements at Seaburn are in need of improvement three felt they are fine as they are. A number of groups commented that the amusements are one of the few wet weather facilities at the seafront, whilst others felt the seafront is more in need of facilities for younger children.



Lighting columns

Opinions on the lighting columns at the seafront also varied. Whilst some groups felt they looked 'nice' others felt they could be repaired. Comments included:

*'They look nice at night. During the day they look faded. They need painting to brighten them up.'*

*'Could hanging baskets be added to them to make them more attractive?'*

None of the groups felt the lightning columns should be removed. They were seen by many as part of the history of the seafront.



Marriott Hotel

Four of the groups felt the Marriott Hotel in Seaburn was in need of repair, two groups felt it should be saved and one group felt that it was in need of replacement. Many of the groups did not like the modern glass frontage. Comments included:

*'The conservatory looks ugly it should go back to its original entrance.'*

*'It's difficult to find the entrance. There's no disabled access.'*



Pullman Lodge

Opinions of the Pullman Lodge at Seaburn varied the most widely. Whilst some groups felt the Pullman Lodge is an important part of the seafront's history and 'something a bit different' others commented it is outdated and in need of replacement.



## Repair/Replace



Seaburn shelter

Seaburn shelter opposite the Seaburn Centre received the most criticism. The majority of groups commented that it is used as a toilet and a centre for anti-social behaviour. Whilst three groups felt it should be replaced four felt it could be kept if it was made more secure or given a use. It was suggested it could be turned into a restaurant, café, ice-cream parlour or beach chalets.

## Other issues

The groups also highlighted a number of additional issues including:

**Activities** - All groups commented that the seafront is currently lacking in activities, particularly wet weather facilities and activities for young people. It was felt that existing children's play is not adequate and there is little to interest teenagers at the seafront. One group commented 'The seafront is not a resort anymore it's just a residential area.'

The majority of groups were keen to see activities which used to be at the seafront brought back such as the boating lake, the train in Roker Park, the sight seeing boat which used to operate from the Marina and the Sunderland Illuminations. The groups also suggested new events and activities should be brought to the seafront. Suggestions included a mini-regatta, tea dances, discos and beach sports such as volley ball.

**South Shields** - five out of the seven groups commented that they were more likely to visit South Shields than Sunderland seafront. When asked why, comments included that it's cleaner, more attractive, the flowers are better, there are more coffee shops, there is a market, better crossings and you can spend a whole day there.

One person commented '*we have a better seafront than South Shields but we need to make more of it.*'

**Toilets** - the majority of groups were critical of the toilets. It was felt there were not enough toilets, they were not open frequently enough and were not clean. The underground toilets at Seaburn were highlighted as being particularly unclean and inaccessible.

**Brighten up** - the majority of groups felt the seafront is in need of brightening up. It was suggested this could be achieved by planting floral displays, painting street furniture a brighter colour or putting up flags. Comments included '*bring the place to life.*'

**Accessibility** - the majority of groups felt the seafront isn't very accessible to get to and to travel around. It was felt buses were not frequent enough. One group highlighted that the buses that do go to the seafront do not have wheelchair ramps. Two groups suggested a shuttle bus connecting St Peter's (candidate World Heritage Site) to the Glass Centre and the Seafront would be popular.

Within Roker and Seaburn, Whitburn Road was seen as busy and difficult to cross. One person commented:

*'Refuge islands (on Whitburn Road) are not good for older people because the traffic moves so quickly.'*

*'On a busy day it's difficult to get from one side of the street to the other.'*

Links between upper and lower promenades were also seen as being difficult to navigate. In particular, the steps down to the Marina and the pathways linking Roker upper promenade to Marine Walk were described as uneven and steep. It was felt there are not enough drop kerbs and disabled access to facilities is poor.

### **Other comments included:**

*'Car parking to the area behind the Seaburn Centre is badly signposted.'*

*'There are too many takeaways and not enough coffee shops.'*

*'There should be more shops selling gifts.'*

*'The Dene looks unpleasant and is dangerous.'*

*'Theatre vans park illegally at the seafront and make crossing the road treacherous.'*

*'There needs to be more policing.'*

*'Events should be given more publicity.'*

*'Remove the former Seaburn fountain.'*

*'The dog bins along Roker Cliff Park are all located on the seaward side, whilst [ordinary litter] bins are located along the road. There needs to be a combination of both along the pathway.'*

## Next steps

The results of the survey and workshops will be considered in conjunction with other consultation data and inform the development of a draft Seafront Regeneration Strategy. In summer 2009 the draft Seafront Regeneration Strategy will undergo further public consultation giving people another opportunity to have their say. Once amended as necessary and adopted the Strategy will be used to guide the development of the seafront at Roker and Seaburn.

# Appendix 1

## **A Vision for Roker and Seaburn Seafront**

### **Community Consultation Report June 2009**

#### **Planning Aid North**

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## Executive summary

Sunderland City Council approached Planning Aid North in December 2008 with the aim of PAN supporting the council in the delivery of a series of visioning workshops to members of the community under the theme of regeneration of the seafronts at Seaburn and Roker.

These workshops would be complementary to the overall consultation that was taking place under the same theme and running alongside the PAN workshops.

The aim of the consultation and the PAN visioning workshops would be for the results to inform the first stage of a Strategy that would look at how the two seafronts could develop over time and what types of issues should be addressed in a master plan.

Members of Sunderland's Community Spirit initiative were invited to attend the workshops and get involved in a series of interactive activities to explore different aspects of Seaburn and Rokers Seafront

The workshops were held in a number of key locations in the city at community venues between Saturday 21st March and Thursday 26th March, with a further workshop held with Sunderland's Youth Parliament in April to gain a youth element to the consultation.

The workshops created an informal setting for attendees to exchange opinions, ideas and views and discuss possible options and visions for the future of the seafront at Seaburn and Roker.

Planning Aid North have now taken the findings from the workshops and included the main themes identified in the workshops in this findings report along with a background to the workshops content.

## A changing seafront



Although the Sunderland International Air Show continues to be successful other popular events such as the Illuminations no longer take place due to a lack of adequate financial resources. Despite this, and a decline in visitor numbers, the seafront remains an asset for the people of Sunderland and visitors providing numerous opportunities for a range of passive and organised activities and events.

Roker and Seaburn still exist to an extent as two distinct areas serving different needs. Commercial activity is concentrated at Seaburn, the focus of which is the Pullman Lodge hotel, amusement arcade and Morrison's supermarket. Restaurants, bars and the Marriott Hotel extend along the remainder of Whitburn Road. There are also a number of council facilities within Seaburn including the Seaburn Centre, children's play facilities and the recently completed skate park. Behind the Seaburn Centre is a vast area of car parking which is well used on events days. Large areas of open space exist at Seaburn in the form of the Recreation Park and Seaburn Camp - both are used as 'event' locations on an occasional basis, but remain relatively under-used during the remainder of the year.

Roker primarily serves as a passive recreational space for residents of Sunderland. Its role does, however, extend to providing some activity for visitors. The beach

serves as the end point to the c2c cycle route. There are some fragmented areas of local interest such as the Volunteer Lifeguard Museum and Roker is the 'hub' for water sports, with facilities such as Adventure Sunderland, Sunderland Yacht Club and North East Dive Academy located in the former lighthouse keeper's cottages. Marine Walk includes the resort office, a pub, amusement arcade, and a newly built inshore lifeboat station. Roker is also the gateway to Sunderland's well established and popular Marina and Marine Activities Centre. The remainder of the built-up area behind the seafront is in private residential use with clusters of hotels, guesthouses and residential care homes.

Despite the presence of a variety of uses at Sunderland's seafront the commercial mix overall is fragmented and dated. The Lambton Worm Gardens and Amusement Park are closed, giving the opportunity to rethink the focus and appeal of the seafront.

*(Sunderland Seafront Regeneration Options Report - Dec 2008)*



## The workshops

Planning Aid North and Sunderland City Council delivered 6 workshops at the following venues during March and April 2009.

Washington Leisure Centre, Saturday, 21st March

Seaburn Leisure Centre , Monday 23rd March

The Hetton Centre, Tuesday 24th March

The Sandhill Centre, Wednesday 25th March

Sunderland City Council, Thursday 26th March

Sunderland Award Centre (Youth Parliament),  
 Wednesday 15th April

The workshops gave community members the chance to discuss issues regarding the future of the seafront study areas at Roker and Seaburn and take part in some group tasks and activities aimed at finding out how the community would like to see the seafront develop over time.

The workshops involved an introduction to the background of the consultation lead by Planning Aid North, followed by a range of mini workshops to look at different aspects linked with the regeneration of the seafront.

The workshops concluded with a general questions and answers session with community members, Sunderland City Council and Planning Aid North staff and Volunteers.

Attendance varied at the workshops; some workshops were fully booked while others were not as full. The information and discussion gained at every workshop was, however, invaluable for the early stages of planning the future of Sunderland's Seafront.

Over the page are the findings and feedback from the 4 mini workshops that were delivered as part of the consultation sessions.



## Findings from the workshops



## The top ten

The top ten priorities task aimed to give workshop members a chance to see what the council had identified as an area or issue at the two seafronts in their seafront regeneration options report.

Members in this workshop were asked to prioritise what they felt were the most important aspect identified by the council that should be looked at first as part of a regeneration strategy and which priorities could wait longer to be addressed.

Workshop members would create a top ten comprising eight issues that the council had identified for the two seafronts and then had to add in two extra issues that they felt were also important to be included in the regeneration of the seafront at Roker and Seaburn

Over the page are the issues identified by the council for Roker and on the following page Seaburn and then the top ten priorities that came from each workshop.

## Roker issues



## Seaburn Issues



## Priorities:

### Workshop 1: Roker priorities

1	Litter and safety
2	Activities
3	Traffic and parking
4	Historic environment
5	Public realm
6	Connectivity
7	Built environment
8	Cycle routes
9	Flood risk
10	-

### Workshop 1: Seaburn priorities

1	Commercial mix and seasonality
2	Toilets
3	Make better use of Seaburn Centre
4	Public realm
5	Built environment
6	Resort awareness
7	Traffic
8	Accommodation
9	Flood risk
10	-

### Workshop 2: Roker priorities

1	Security and safety
2	Activities and facilities
3	Public space
4	Heritage and environment
5	Connectivity
6	Built environment
7	Cycle routes
8	Traffic and parking
9	Flood risk
10	-

### Workshop 2: Seaburn priorities

1	Commercial mix
2	Seasonality
3	Public realm
4	Legibility
5	Connectivity
6	Accommodation
7	Built environment
8	Resort awareness
9	Traffic calming
10	Flood risk

### Workshop 3: Roker priorities

1	Activities and facilities
2	Traffic and parking
3	Heritage and environment and toilets
4	Public realm
5	Connectivity
6	Built environment
7	Cycle routes
8	Flood risk
9	-
10	-

### Workshop 3: Seaburn priorities

1	Signage and commercial mix
2	Public realm
3	Traffic Whitburn Road
4	Built environment
5	Commercial mix
6	Safety
7	Resort awareness
8	Accommodation
9	Seasonality
10	Flood risk

**Workshop 4: Roker priorities**

1	Activities and facilities
2	Dog dirt
3	Heritage and environment
4	Public realm
5	Traffic and parking
6	Connectivity
7	Cycle routes
8	Built environment
9	Flood risk
10	-

**Workshop 4: Seaburn priorities**

1	Signage
2	Accommodation, traffic Whitburn Road
3	Commercial mix
4	Seasonality
5	Public realm
6	Built environment
7	Resort awareness
8	Flood risk
9	-
10	-

**Workshop 5: Roker priorities**

1	Activities and facilities
2	Traffic and parking
3	Public realm
4	Historic environment
5	Connectivity
6	Built environment
7	Cycle routes
8	Safety
9	Flood risk
10	-

**Workshop 5: Seaburn priorities**

1	Quick facelift generally
2	Toilets
3	Resort awareness
4	Built environment
5	Accommodation
6	Public realm
7	Commercial mix
8	Traffic
9	Flood risk
10	-

**Workshop 6: Roker priorities**

1	Activities
2	Traffic and parking
3	Historic environment
4	Connectivity
5	Public realm
6	Built environment
7	Cycle routes
8	Flood risk
9	-
10	-

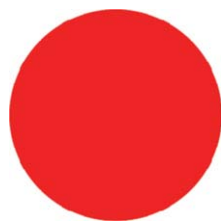
**Workshop 6: Seaburn priorities**

1	Public realm and toilets
2	Seasonality
3	Commercial mix
4	Accommodation
5	Resort awareness
6	Traffic Whitburn Road
7	Built environment
8	Flood risk
9	-
10	-

## The good, the bad and the ugly



**The good** - Features of the seafront that discussion at the workshops established as being a good part of the seafront and should be promoted in the regeneration of Seaburn or Roker.



**The bad** - Features of the seafront that discussion at the workshops established as needing a bit of investment, changing for the better or giving a new lease of life as part of the regeneration of Seaburn or Roker.



**The ugly** - Features of the seafront that discussion at the workshops established as being ugly and if they were removed the group would not miss the feature.





- The street lamps offer a sense of pride
- You know you're in Seaburn when you see the lamps
- Don't mind the colours
- Could a season-long set of illuminations come back?
- The bulbs should be themed with a colour
- Use the lights as a means of bringing in more people



- Massively under-utilised and needs a total refurbishment
- Don't know what goes on in there
- Dingy and horrible
- Not very well run
- Building is outdated
- The space outside the front is under-used
- Could you put a swimming pool in the place?
- An all-season larger mixed use facility is needed
- A seafront pavement café outside in the summer
- Not always open
- The place needs to be used for more interesting things
- Knock it down and start again



- Good facility but needs signposting
- Always looks closed
- Not many people know about it
- A welcoming information sign is needed
- The building does look good
- A great facility if it was advertised more
- Integrate it with a café on nice weather to catch passing trade
- Market it more around the city



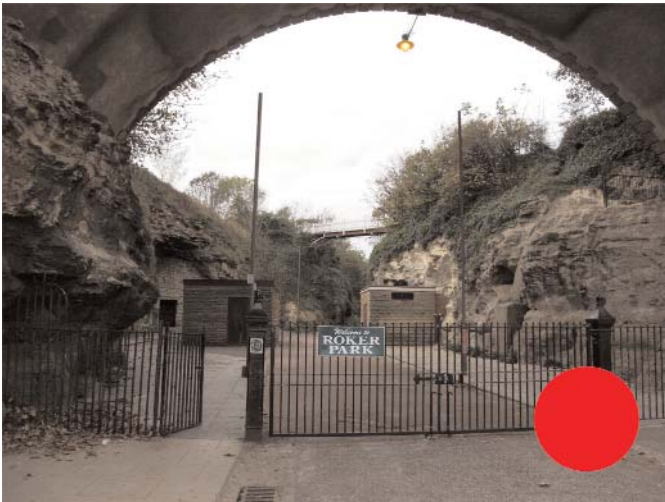
- The pier is a lovely walk, it needs a toilet at the end of it though
- The diving centre has done really well
- Could the lighthouse not be opened up for viewing?
- A facility for the fishermen at either end of the pier
- Parking for anglers, divers and others
- Could the council integrate some council-run, smaller aqua facilities here too - like a marine centre?



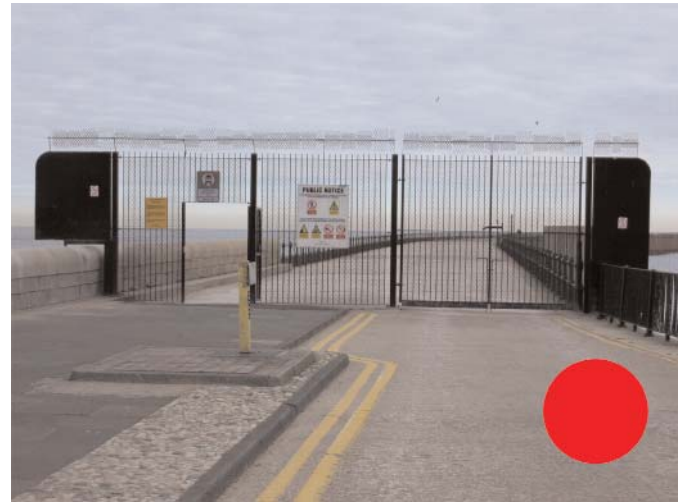
- No consistency in seating
- They should face the sea
- Use recycled plastic for all new seats
- Seats made of hard wearing material that will last
- Adopt a seat scheme for schools and community groups
- Don't put as many seats along the coast
- Put the seats in the places you would want to sit
- Seats with views



- Awful looking, dangerous and needs redesigning
- We have to maintain a way of getting down to the beach
- Needs improving, it's unattractive
- You can't get a pushchair or wheelchair up or down this route easily
- Some planting
- Better surfacing
- Unsafe for children
- Need money spent on the steps to bring up to standard for all



- I didn't know it was an entrance to the park
- A theatre or performance area could be built here
- Paint the sub-stations with the help of local school children
- The gate has a "keep out" feel to it
- It's the only entrance to the park, let's make it a bit more interesting
- Need to hide the sub-stations in some way
- Plant around the sub-stations
- Open the caves up again - good for tourists
- There's a lot of rare birds here
- Good education spot for an outdoor classroom
- It smells and floods when there's heavy rain



- Use some local artist to redesign the gates to make them look attractive
- Use the city badge as the gate
- Something like North Haven Business Park
- As a minimum could you not paint the gates?
- They look a bit like a prison
- They are they for a purpose but could look better
- Again lets brighten things up instead of black
- More information about access to the pier, times when you can walk along it
- A market on the pier on a Sunday
- Lights along the pier



- A proper information centre is needed integrated into the shelter maybe
- You would walk past this without even noticing it
- A Tourist Information Centre may not be noticeable down here and should be higher up
- A nice modern building with a coastal theme
- Toilets and changing facilities at the resorts office
- Cycle hire at the resorts office maybe?

- If all the houses are maintained properly they give the seafront a good feel



- Uninviting
- No theme here, needs an identity, there's no reason to go here
- We need something to attract people down to this part of the coast
- A visitor attraction about the maritime history of Sunderland
- Looks a bit desolate
- I wouldn't go down here after dark



- The seats should be facing the sea!
- More colour, planting, palms, tables to stop and sit
- Could the Marriot hotel provide more of a link at this point to their hotel?
- Resurfacing maybe with a uniform material all the way along the coast
- A historical walk where you can stop at information boards along the way and look out points too
- It's a dead space at the moment



- Not bad but it's in the wrong location, not very inviting
- This is a big appeal to some people not everyone does not like it we have to be fair
- Good from an economic point of view
- An unattractive building
- Nothing else going on around it sticks out a bit of an eyesore
- Horrible and ugly
- Does have a "Blackpool Look" to it
- As far as amusements go it doesn't look that bad
- It is somewhere to go when it's wet but there's more important wet weather facilities needed



- Looks shabby but it is a good facility
- Could be better used
- Tidy it up
- Good for wedding-style facilities
- Advertise it a bit and get rid of the train; its old fashioned



- The hotel facility is a good one but it does look a bit dated
- The fountain on the roundabout is horrible
- A better piece of public art from the community would be good



- A range of independent shops is needed here
- There's currently parking issues
- No parking outside the shops unless delivering
- Widen the pavement and remove the parking bays
- Pavement cafés would be really nice here looking out to sea
- A café culture would thrive along here, ice creams tea rooms, continental cafés and the like
- A covered walkway to sit under
- A seaside tourist shop selling buckets, spades and souvenirs
- There's a beautiful view from these buildings; try and build on it





- It's nice inside but not keen on the glass front
- Don't mind it, the extension looks dated
- There used to be a lovely foyer with a gold fish pond when LS Lowry stayed there, bring back a bit history



- Eyesore, really bad. We need toilets but they need to look much better in a better location
- Baby changing facilities should be included
- Demolish this it's horrible
- Needs pulling down or seriously regenerating
- Terrible, there's not enough either
- Toilets that are open all the time and are clean
- Toilets located along popular walks
- Wouldn't mind paying for them if they're maintained 24/7
- Toilets are the first thing on the list for me!



- Change them for planters or palm shades
- There needs to be more of a natural walk along the front - this doesn't look like an attractive walk
- Bollards are boring concrete circles, surely it would not be much to put in some prettier ones.



- Good use but an unattractive building that looks closed
- Make more use of souvenirs here
- Museum should be promoted
- Make it more obvious there's a museum there
- Very good, we need it, it has a use and its used but it does look like it needs "sprucing up a bit"
- You can't see the name "Roker VLS Watch House" very well from the pavement as it's on the roof
- A nice big sign to say what it is



- Everyone seems to like the café
- Could be bigger
- It should have more internal toilets in it maybe
- It's been there that long it has to stay
- A bike rack at the end of the cycle path
- The café has the best toilet in the area
- Information about the history of the area inside



- Was a good facility when it was a paddling pool
- Maybe a toddlers' play area
- Could be vandalised as it is isolated from view at night if there was a park there for kids
- It's a natural sun trap
- Turn it back into a swimming pool
- Some kind of amphitheatre for small performances



- Bins are ok looking but a similar style along the coast might look better
- They need to be emptied regularly on hot weekends when the coast is busy
- I've seen better bins that look more attractive
- New coastal themed bins



- Needs maintained - the park near this is a great facility
- A series of "play pods" or play parks along the seafront to encourage families to walk along



- Not pedestrian friendly
- They are there for a reason but they look very messy
- Could the bollards be redesigned in a better way for pedestrians?
- One gate at one end rather than all of the bollards
- Planting on the hills would be good to take away the influence of the bollards
- The two spaces need to link up better and make you want to walk along



- Needs resurfacing completely
- An information board
- A tourist info centre would be good here
- A place to shower and clean up after the c2c ride
- An end point for the c2c with a statue or piece of art in the water for example
- A link with the Olympic swimming pool here
- Watersports area would work at this location too
- Extend the art walk or the features of the marina into this area
- An ideal meeting point for cyclists
- Bike racks and lockers



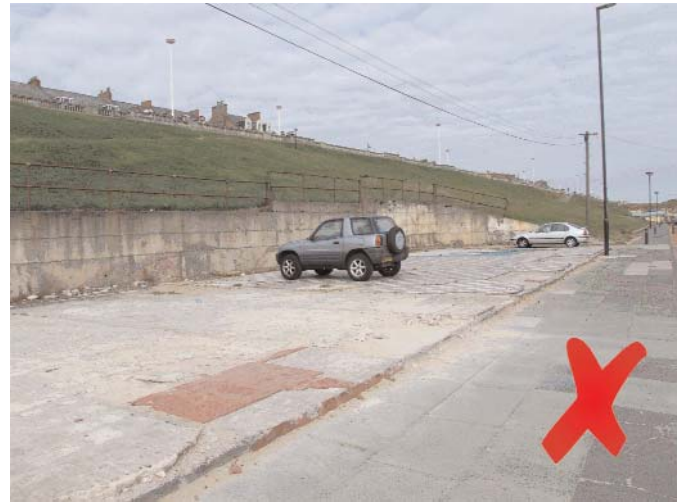
- Landscape it as a short term measure
- Could be a potential development site for a restaurant



- Bring back the boating lake and train
- Nice greenery what about a kids play park with pond and flowers?
- Outdoor activities park for all the family
- It's a safe looking place to play away from traffic
- This is a good piece of space, good for kids
- What about a "GO APE" style facility for families?
- A crazy golf course would be good here
- Somewhere you could just go and let the kids play safely while adults could do something else



- Not a lot of people know this area is here
- Public realm needs improving with better paving, cobbles and greenery
- Design a walk that takes you around the back of Seaburn centre and Morrisons along here
- Just tidy it up and make it look a bit more inviting



- Tarmac it and use it as a paid car park
- Could be a site for a Tourist Information Centre
- There's space and potential here
- A stage or place for summer outdoor gigs
- A fisherman's market

## Whose seafront is it anyway?

This workshop looked at aerial pictures of the two seafront areas at Roker and Seaburn; workshop members were invited to discuss issues that they had a local knowledge of, decide if there were certain parts of the seafront that were more suited to particular groups in the community and point out areas that could be improved or made better for the regeneration of the seafront.

The groups that were identified as being important users of the seafront are on the next page.

The following pages show the ideas where the seafront could be improved for the different groups from the workshops.

The final two pages in this section show the two aerial views of the seafronts at Roker and Seaburn.







**Family**



**Disabled people**



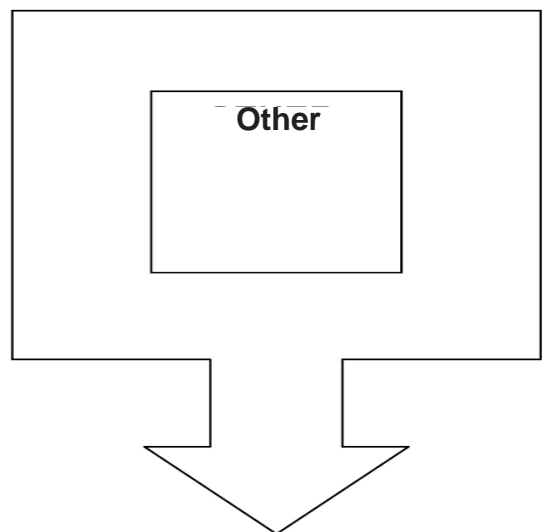
**Young people**



**Older people**



**Tourists**



<b>Community group</b>	
<b>Older people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seating for older people along the seafront facing the sea</li> <li>● Shelters for older people if they want to sit and shelter from the elements</li> <li>● An old style coffee bar with milkshakes and a bit of a traditional look.</li> <li>● A heritage display</li> <li>● Heritage walks for older people by experts about the history of the coast</li> <li>● Better street furniture all along the coast</li> <li>● Generally more activities for older people along the seafront at Roker</li> </ul>
<b>Younger people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Got to get live music for younger generation down at the seafront; SUNDERLAND LIVE for the younger generation</li> <li>● The beach is popular with young people but the older people would like things to do while young people are off enjoying themselves</li> <li>● A school planting scheme run by young people on the banks at Roker to brighten up the banks</li> <li>● A general need to involve young people in art and design along the seafront is essential, art funding could be tapped into using this approach maybe</li> <li>● Children's competitions on the beach</li> <li>● Using parts of the beach for outdoor education</li> </ul>
<b>Disabled People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More disabled parking in Roker</li> <li>● Access ramps located along the seafront</li> <li>● Access issues for wheelchair users and pushchairs etc in getting from the main road down to the seafront. This needs to be addressed with key access points for disabled users along the seafront clearly signed</li> <li>● A disabled toilet at Roker</li> <li>● Access through Roker Park and on along the coast</li> </ul>
<b>Family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A family coffee bar at the Smugglers Bar area (like Crusoe's at North Tyneside)</li> <li>● Sandpit and paddling pool for young ones where you can easily supervise and free</li> <li>● A "Noddy" train all the way from south Roker through the park all the way along the coast with drop off points all the way along</li> <li>● Events, illuminations we need to make people get out of the car and use other facilities and spend money</li> <li>● The cost of the diving centre puts people off</li> <li>● It's not clear what is available at Adventure Sunderland</li> <li>● Sailing boats for the family to hire in the shallow waters</li> <li>● Walks along the seafront - different colours indicating different levels of difficulty</li> <li>● A firework display at the bay for families in November</li> </ul>

<b>Tourists</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Information boards at Roker explaining where to eat, sleep drink and spend other leisure time</li> <li>● Hire facilities for tourists, bikes tandems, surf boards, skateboards</li> <li>● Cycle and Dine - a bike hire service integrated with a café</li> <li>● Trips between the two piers on boats</li> <li>● Market research to find out how people visit the seafront and where they stay</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Creating wildlife spots along Roker seafront</li> <li>● A sign showing the link from Roker park to seafront</li> <li>● Signage for all at the south end of Roker</li> <li>● A triathlon event at the seafront</li> <li>● Roker Pier fishermen should be encouraged in order to promote a range of uses at the seafront</li> <li>● The shallow water at Roker Pier could be better used</li> <li>● Something is needed at the end of the c2c cycle route for every group whether they are cyclists, tourists or residents. Where to get a shower, park you bike and have an overnight stay. Something to say welcome to the end or beginning of the c2c ride.</li> <li>● Spaces along the seafront for local artists to exhibit their work</li> <li>● Facilities for fishermen so they can clean up after their fishing, a tap and sink and litter bins and toilet maybe</li> <li>● The marina at Roker is a great success but many people don't know it's there as there's no signage to it. The route from the marina to the seafront should be more widely recognised.</li> <li>● A link with the National Glass Centre and the coast glass does have sand as a major part of it and there's lots of sand on the beach - would people know that there's a link?</li> <li>● A Food and Wine festival at the seafront would be good for all ages</li> <li>● Advertising and promotion of the Sunderland Dive Centre</li> <li>● Better fining system for dog fouling</li> </ul>

<b>Community group</b>	
<b>Older people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There was an antiques fair in the Seaburn centre but it was indoors, it should be outdoors in a marquee for example</li> <li>● Accessibility by bus is poor on the seafront bus service</li> <li>● A shoppa-bus with pick up and drop off from home to Morrisons for example</li> <li>● Bicycle hire along the seafront</li> <li>● Better street furniture all the way along the coast</li> <li>● Generally more activities for older people along the seafront at Seaburn</li> </ul>
<b>Younger people</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Seaburn Centre looks too dark from the outside</li> <li>● Kids need a quality play park at Seaburn with activities for all ages, needs to be overlooked with adults seating and a café maybe</li> <li>● Children's fun run on the beach</li> <li>● Using the Seaburn centre for teenage activities</li> <li>● Music and bands somewhere at Seaburn in the summer - battle of the bands competition</li> <li>● Using parts of the beach for outdoor classrooms</li> <li>● A MUGA (Multi Use Games Area) near Morrisons</li> <li>● Split the age groups across the two seafront areas. Older groups at Seaburn and younger groups at Roker with different activities for different age groups</li> <li>● A young person's music festival with camping like the evolution festival at Newcastle and Gateshead. The Seaburn camp is a much better area</li> </ul>
<b>Disabled People</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More disabled parking in Seaburn</li> <li>● Access ramps located along the seafront</li> </ul>
<b>Family</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The vacant land next to Seaburn could be used for leisure facilities with toilets changing areas and well maintained. Like a general coastal changing and information facility</li> <li>● The Lambton Worm Playground is now derelict</li> <li>● There used to be a small train that ran like the one at South Shields</li> <li>● A wet weather attraction is needed, an ice rink or leisure pool</li> <li>● An indoor spa and swimming facilities would be good on the site of the old fairground</li> <li>● A park for kids and a restaurant for adults</li> <li>● More signage for all telling us where all this will be</li> <li>● Better café needed at the Seaburn Centre</li> <li>● A glass front with a beautiful view at the Seaburn centre, you shouldn't have to go to Morrisons for a cup of tea or coffee</li> <li>● There's a lack of picnic benches</li> <li>● Picnic places for the family at Seaburn camp</li> <li>● The Seaburn centre has nothing in the foyer, no help, its unwelcoming for families</li> <li>● The vacant fairground would be a good ice rink facility</li> <li>● A nine hole golf course on Seaburn camp area, would keep the openness of the place</li> <li>● Cafés at Seaburn</li> <li>● Camping back on Seaburn camp again for all</li> </ul>

<b>Tourists</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Live Music</li> <li>● There's no where to buy souvenirs, buckets and spades, Sunderland rock etc</li> <li>● Publicising the women's 10k run along the seafront a lot more</li> <li>● A caravan club at Seaburn?</li> <li>● Use the Seaburn centre as an arena for tourist related events.</li> <li>● Information boards at Seaburn explaining where to eat, sleep drink and spend other leisure time</li> <li>● Mini golf behind Morrisons</li> <li>● A handout on all the activities going on in Seaburn and Roker</li> </ul>
<b>Other</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Accessibility from Washington difficult (3 bus trips from Sunderland)</li> <li>● South Shields is much better than Sunderlands Seafront - it should be the same or better. Marine Park is a good example</li> <li>● Big residential area - harness local skills when redesigning the public realm</li> <li>● Transport - Trams?</li> <li>● Pedestrian access is good in most places</li> <li>● Speed restrictions would be good along busy stretches of the seafront 20 mph zones</li> <li>● Seaburn does need a vision or a main reason to go there</li> <li>● We need an all year buzz, not just in certain parts of the year</li> <li>● We need a central focus on the area for example zones (an activity zone, fun zone, relaxing zone)</li> <li>● A free bus along the seafront going back and forward in summer season to hop on and hop off?</li> <li>● Bright, clean colours for street furniture</li> <li>● Look at Scarborough for examples of good practice</li> <li>● Use South Shields as an example of improving the public realm, they seem to have succeeded</li> </ul>

## Useful information

### Planning Aid

Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay planning consultant fees. It complements the work of local planning authorities, but is wholly independent of them.

Planning Aid was started by the Town and Country Planning Association in 1973 and has consistently proved its worth. From the beginning, it has been at the forefront of engaging communities in the planning process. Now Planning Aid is working to further widen engagement in the planning process and to give an equal voice to all those involved in planning.

In 2005 the Officer of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) confirmed funding until 2008. The funding and support will help to build a bigger and better Planning Aid network. Planning Aid is about much more than giving advice. It engages communities positively in the planning process to help them manage changes to their neighbourhood areas. Planning Aid can help people to:

- Understand and use the planning system
- Participate in preparing plans
- Prepare their own plans for the future of their community
- Comment on planning applications
- Apply for planning permission or appeal against refusal of permission
- Represent themselves at public inquiries.

Planning Aid helps to meet one of the key aims of the government's planning reform agenda, which is to place community engagement at the heart of the planning system.

More information on Planning Aid can be found at [www.planningaid.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.org.uk)

### Sunderland's Citizens' Panel - Community Spirit

Sunderland City Council recognises the importance of delivering the community consultation agenda, as a key step towards achieving Best Value, service improvement and democratic renewal. Our Community Consultation Strategy sets out key objectives for engaging with the local community and emphasises the need to coordinate our consultation programme both within the Council and also with partners. It emphasises the importance of maintaining an ongoing dialogue with consultees and the removal of potential barriers.

## Acknowledgements

Planning Aid North would like to thank all those who took part in the organisation delivery and participation of the Seaburn and Roker seafront community consultation workshops during March and April 2009. Although this report only represents the views of those involved in the workshops it plays an important role in the overall consultation on the development of the seafront at Roker and Seaburn and can only strengthen the community input to the future regeneration of an area with great potential in the City of Sunderland.





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